

CLAIMS:

The following is a listing of all claims presented in the application, an indication of how they are to be amended and their current status:

Claims 1-19. (Canceled)

20. (Presently Amended) A material discharge apparatus for controlling the discharge of flowable material being conveyed through a conical shaped hopper until in feeding of material is stopped or ends, the hopper being configured and arranged, in use, to be operable at a height above a discharge pile, the apparatus including the hopper having an inlet opening at the top of the hopper adjacent the top—and an open discharge outlet at the base of the hopper, the hopper being adapted to be suspended below a fixed support frame by hopper support members, the area directly below and about the open discharge outlet being open to the surrounding environment, the discharge outlet being exposed to the surrounding environment such that, in use, flowable material is discharged through the open discharge outlet, and a valve means being configured and arranged in the hopper, the valve means including a bulb having a lower end portion positionable adjacent the discharge outlet forming a gap between the inner wall of the hopper and the bulb for material, in use, to flow by being gravity fed therebetween and out through the open discharge outlet, the bulb being adapted to be suspended below the fixed support frame, the ~~valve means and/or the~~ hopper being adapted to move relative to the valve means ~~other~~, in use, for ~~controlling the rate of~~ allowing a continual discharge of material through the gap and out through the open discharge outlet to form a column of flowing discharge material to reduce the amount of dust being dispersed into the surrounding environment.

21. (Previously Amended) A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 wherein the valve means is arranged in the hopper such that the lower end portion adjacent the discharge outlet is substantially centrally positioned such that the gap between the hopper and the valve means is evenly spaced about the lower end portion of the valve means, and wherein the discharge outlet is not closed by the valve means.
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Presently Amended) A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 ~~22~~ wherein the hopper is adapted to be suspended below a support frame by a plurality of spaced apart hopper support members, the hopper support members being elastic in form, in use, to expand under the weight of material being conveyed through the hopper so as to increase the gap between the hopper and the valve means to increase the flow of material therethrough.
24. (Previously Amended) A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 wherein the valve means includes a bulb having a lower end portion having a circular cross section, and wherein the hopper has a circular cross section that is tapered toward the discharge outlet.
25. (Cancelled)
26. (Cancelled)
27. (Cancelled)
28. A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 wherein the hopper is made of a rotary moulded plastics material.
29. (Presently Amended) A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 ~~22~~ wherein the hopper support members include coil springs, in use, that are expandable under the weight of lading in the hopper.
30. (Cancelled)
31. (Cancelled).
32. (Cancelled)
33. (Cancelled)
34. (Cancelled)

35. (Previously submitted) A material discharge apparatus according to claim 20 wherein the bulb includes a conical lower end portion, and a conical top portion with a circular cross section being tapered toward the top end portion forming an inverted cone on the lower end portion, the conical lower end portion being tapered toward the lower end of the bulb.